

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**  
**FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**July 30, 2003, 4:30 p.m. Council Chambers**

**PRESENT**

Pat Bryant  
Joan Chelton  
Dave Clingan  
Cindy Felsten  
Jay Myers  
Gil Palmer  
Chrystal Pushor  
Dick Underdahl-Peirce  
Marie Schroeder

**ABSENT**

Barbara Stevens  
Madhu Vedak

**STAFF PRESENT:** Director Arlette Tinsley, Deputy Director Lorraine Smith

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

Commissioner Bryant moved to accept the March minutes of the regular full commission meeting of March. Commissioner Underdahl-Peirce seconded. Motion passed.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Commissioner Bryant reported a balance of \$5,016. 32 in the Commission's donations account.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:**

No Report.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Director Tinsley reported that she will be presenting the Commission's budget proposal to the city council on Thursday August 7th at 7:30 a.m. She solicited questions from the Commission about the budget. There were none. Director Tinsley reported that she is proposing a slight increase in the subscriptions category due to continued rising costs in the office's legal subscriptions. She stated that she eliminated some of the manual subscriptions and replaced those services added an on-line legal subscription in an effort to reduce costs.

A sexual harassment in employment case was closed and the office accepted a disability in housing case, which is now in mediation. Director Tinsley reported that she has put in a significant number of hours on the case in order to prevent an imminent eviction of the Complainant.

She talked with City Clerk Treasurer John Baughn about the Commissioner's question regarding the possibility of setting up a petty cash drawer. Director Tinsley informed the Commissioner that they would could have a cash drawer, but the rules as to how that money is spent is the same as if it were in a city line item. She stated that Clerk Treasurer Baughn informed her that the monies could not be used for promotional

purposes; that is for activities not directly related to the work of the Commission. As an example, Director Tinsley stated that annual dinner funds could not be redirected to activities considered promotional such as gifts to speakers. Through Commission consensus, the Commissioners agreed to fund gifts, funeral acknowledgements and other similar items through commissioner donations on an as-needed basis and that each Commissioner can decide to contribute or not on a case-by-case basis.

Director Tinsley informed the Commissioners that Debra Haza who is profiled on the CHRC maintained Columbus Cultural Connection website requested that she be taken off of the website completely. Director Tinsley stated that she tried to ascertain if reasons such as hate mail was the reason Ms. Haza made the request, but Ms. Haza did not give her specifics. Director Tinsley has spoken with TLS the company who maintains the city's web pages along with Columbus Cultural Connection in order to remove Ms. Haza. In the course of the conversation, Director Tinsley spoke with TLS about structuring the Columbus Cultural community calendar in such a way that the updates can be done from the Commission office. TLS agreed to remove Ms. Haza for no cost and to create a program for self-maintenance of the community calendar at a reduced cost of \$280. Commissioner Schroeder suggested that the Commission find out how many hits that site has had to assess whether it's worth paying \$280. Director Tinsley agreed to find out. Commissioner Clingan suggested that Director Tinsley not agree to add a counter to the site. Director Tinsley requested that Commissioners Clingan and Schroeder, who are on the committee to monitor the site's links, peruse the links for the Columbus Cultural connection site to make sure they are working.

#### **FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**

##### **2003-2004 Essay Contest Topic Proposal:**

Director Tinsley introduced Donna Guyer who was in attendance to present an essay topic to the Commissioners to consider for the upcoming contest. Ms. Guyer is a Cummins executive and is a volunteer with PFLAG. After each Commissioner was introduced, Ms. Guyer made her presentation. Ms. Guyer stated that there will be an AIDS community event held in November that will contain an educational component. There will be professional speakers as well as personal testimonials on the issue. As part of the educational components, the organizers came up with the idea of the essay contest and decided to solicit the help of the Commission since we already sponsor a contest within the school system. Ms. Guyer stated that the organizers of the event are willing to provide volunteers to read and judge the essay as well as be the 'arms and legs' to distribute the essay contest materials. Ms. Guyer presented the draft topic to the Commissioners.

After the presentation the Commissioners discussed the presented topic. Commissioner Chelton asked Director Tinsley to repeat for the rest of the Commissioner the link that the topic would have to the mission and work of the Commission. Director Tinsley stated that HIV Status/AIDS, even if asymptomatic is considered a disability under the local law that the Commission enforces. She stated that HIV/AIDS could also be covered under our local ordinance as perceived disability as well. The Commissioners discussed how the deadline of November 29 would be extremely tight for the topic to be distributed to the school system. There was also discussion about the level of awareness in the school system currently. Commissioner Bryant thought that there wasn't much in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades, but there is discussion in middle and high

school in health classes. The discussion further entailed the possibility of coming up with another topic for elementary school.

There was discussion that the topic could focus on the disability piece and the treatment of others and not go into detail that it is also a sexually transmitted disease. Director Tinsley stated that she found a full fourth grade curriculum devised by a Yale professor that addresses the issue of AIDS through the treatment of others that centers on Ruby Bridges, Ryan White and Anne Frank who all suffered persecution at a young age either due to race, disability (AIDS) or religion.

Commissioner Schroeder asked the Commissioners to be fully cognizant of the potential of controversy that could be sparked by the topic. And that if the decision is made to accept the topic, it should be made knowing that controversy may occur, but to make that decision and stand by it with full awareness in the beginning.

Although Ms. Guyer made the offer to help with prize money, which is acceptable since the organizers of the event are a not-for-profit, the commissioners respectfully declined the offer and chose to proceed with its normal essay contest prizes. The Commissioners discussed several issues including possible elimination of the high school level art contest and re-instituting the essay contest and that the Commission. As to clarity on sponsorship of the contest, the Commission and Ms. Guyer agreed that the Commission will be the sponsor of the contest and that Ms. Guyer's organization will act as a resource, such as helping with formulating the topic, distributing topic info, etc. The Commission will send out the topic on its own letterhead.

**After discussion, Commissioner Myers moved that the Commission's 2003 essay topic will be HIV/AIDS as a disability. Commissioner Clingan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.** Director Tinsley informed Ms. Guyer that she will be getting in contact with her regarding the next steps in the process.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Review All Children Belong-ABA 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Curriculum:**

The Commissioners reviewed the video of a possible training tool that the Commission can utilize the school system to provide education and outreach to elementary age children, particularly third graders. The topic of the video dealt with the treatment of others. Director Tinsley gave an overview of the structure of the training guide to be used by the facilitator.

After the video the Commissioners discussed the potential use of the video. Commissioner Clingan felt that some of the reenactments in the video equates some issues such as not being picked for a team as the same as negative treatment based on one's race, which is a conundrum and may be difficult for third graders to understand. Chairperson Palmer asked if the local attorneys are participating in this. Director Tinsley said no; she stated that she thought this would be a tool that the Commission could use. Commissioner Bryant stated that he thought it would be hard to get the video into the school because of the strong emphasis on academic skills and that we would have to find a way to integrate the tape with the curriculum. Director Tinsley suggested that it might be possible to find the connection to writing skills or some other part of the curriculum and likened the tape to Paulette Roberts' Acts of Kindness program. Commissioner Myers stated that the problem he sees is that third grade is ISTEP testing grade and that for the first four months kids are preparing for the test. He stated he liked

the “Brown Eyes, Blue Eyes” training video. After discussion, Director Tinsley stated that she has other videos that they could preview and will put them on the upcoming agendas.

### **LIASON UPDATES**

Commissioner Joan Chelton – Cultural Awareness Committee: Commissioner Chelton reported on her Cultural Awareness Committee meeting. She stated that the Committee is working on Ethic Expo plans the panel discussion. The panel topic this year will center on holidays and traditions from various countries and the barriers to celebrations of those holidays and traditions in this country. The displays will be at City Hall rather than the Commons. She stated that the committee is now comprised of about 7-8 people. Commissioner Chelton reported that the committee has approached John Clark about placing the cultural calendar in The Zone, which will include holidays such as Ramadan. Director Tinsley recommended that Commissioner Chelton and/or the committee review the website “Belief Net” for information on various religious holidays.

Commissioner Cindy Felsten - PFLAG:

No Report. She has been out of the country, but the group had a picnic at Mill Race.

Commissioner Jay Myers – Transportation Board:

No Report. Board meets next quarter.

Commissioner Dave Clingan – Art Columbus:

Due to the board’s attendance requirements and his inability attend more frequently than his schedule will allow, Commissioner Clingan is no longer on the board. However, he still receives information/updates and will continue to pass those updates on to the Commission.

### **ADJOURN:**

**As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned upon motion from Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Chelton.**